



The Old Ironsides Report



24 Sept. 2003

Volume I Issue 65

Engineers make TCPs safer, easier to operate

Story and photo by Spc. Jason B. Baker, 49th Public Affairs Detachment (Abn.)

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Combat engineers are responsible for protecting the force and shaping the battle. Even though major combat operations have ceased in Iraq, the Sapper's mission is still as vital as before.

Engineers recently provided the materials and expertise to set up four permanent traffic control points (TCPs) in a rural southern suburb of Baghdad.

Company B, 307th Engineer Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division, set up TCPs in support of a recent operation to prevent the trafficking of weapons and bomb making materials into Baghdad.

During the operation, units assigned to 1st Armored Division swept through the rural areas to the south and west of Baghdad to root out any resistance.

Task Force Falcon manned traffic control points along the southern border of Baghdad along with Iraqi Police. The police were being trained on the proper procedures for running a TCP so they can take over on a permanent basis after the operation.

The TCPs are a major part of the mission, said 1st Lt. Sean Shields, platoon leader, Co. B, 307th Eng. Bn. "Main TCPs are setup on Highway 8 (the primary road leading into Baghdad from the south) If the enemy tries to by-pass them then they will be stopped by our TCPs."

The task force has manned TCPs in the area for quite some time, said Pfc. Justin Sloan, engineer, Co. B, 307th Engineer Bn. The engineers were called upon to set up permanent TCPs that Iraqi Police will man regularly after the operation. The engineers provided the sand-filled wire barriers, concertina wire and hedge hog barriers needed to construct the key features of an effective TCP, said Sloan.

The hedge hog barriers, large iron obstacles that resemble a child's toy tack, are placed in a staggered position in the approaching lane to slow vehicles before they are stopped and searched.

The lanes are split by a line of large metal baskets filled with dirt, called "Hesco" barriers – named after their manufacturer, helping the soldiers control the flow of traffic. The engineers use the concertina wire to create holding areas for suspicious vehicles and detainees. The engineers fully understand the importance of the mission they have securing the force in Baghdad, said Pfc. Alex Miller, engineer, Co. B, 307th



Spc. Josh Michael, engineer, Co.B, 307th Engineer Battalion and Staff Sgt. Corey Frazer set up serpentine obstacle at a traffic control point in southern Baghdad.

Eng. Bn. A few of the engineers working on the TCPs were injured during an improvised explosive device strike while working in the area a few weeks prior.

"What we're doing today is pretty important," Miller said. "This is a really bad area; there are a lot of guns and IED s that come through here. It will be good to screen them out."

Operations have changed and danger still exists but the paratroopers always count on the work of the engineers to make the environment safer and the work easier.

NEWS

Bush speaks to United Nations, says Iraq 'needs the help of friends'

Unbending in spite of widespread opposition, President Bush spoke to the United Nations on Tuesday to try to marshal support for a deliberate transition to democracy in Iraq. Noting that "some of the sovereign nations of this assembly disagree with our actions," Bush offered the United Nations a larger role in Iraq's reconstruction, but did not budge from his plan for step-by-step transformation of Iraq to democracy.

"This process must unfold according to the needs of Iraqis — neither hurried nor delayed by the wishes of other parties," he said, adding that the world body should assist in preparing a constitution for Iraq, help train civil servants and conduct free and fair elections.

Possible Tornado Hits Isabel-Damaged Va.

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) - A possible tornado damaged sections of the Richmond area Tuesday and torrential rain flooded parts of Maryland, adding to the power outages and other problems the region already faced from Hurricane Isabel.

No injuries were reported in Richmond, but trees that survived Isabel were toppled, homes were damaged and 40,000 customers lost power, some for the second time since Isabel struck last week. The newly blacked-out customers added to the hundreds of thousands still waiting for repairs to outages caused by Isabel.

Chaplain's Thought for the Day:

Handcrafted by God

Our light affliction . . . is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. --2 Corinthians 4:17

The Steinway piano has been preferred by keyboard masters such as Horowitz, Cliburn, and Liszt—and for good reason. It is a skillfully crafted instrument that produces phenomenal sound.

Steinway pianos are built today the same way they were 140 years ago when Henry Steinway started his business. Two hundred craftsmen and 12,000 parts are required to produce one of these magnificent instruments. Most crucial is the rim-bending process, where 18 layers of maple are bent around an iron press to create the shape of a Steinway grand. Five coats of lacquer are applied and hand-rubbed to give the piano its outer glow. The instrument then goes to the Pounder Room, where each key is tested 10,000 times to ensure quality and durability.

We are also being "handcrafted." We are polished, sometimes in the rubbing of affliction, until we "glow." We are tested in the laboratory of everyday human experience. The process is not always pleasant, but we can persevere with hope, knowing that our lives will increasingly reflect the beauty of holiness to the eternal praise of God.

SPORTS

Clarett Sues NFL Over Draft Eligibility

NEW YORK (AP) - Suspended Ohio State tailback Maurice Clarett sued the NFL on Tuesday, asking a judge to throw out a league rule preventing players from entering the draft until they have been out of high school for three years. Clarett, who rushed for 1,237 yards and led Ohio State to a national championship as a freshman last season, is not eligible for the draft until 2005 under current rules.

Jon Bon Jovi Starting Arena Football Team

PHILADELPHIA (AP) - Rock star, and football fan, Jon Bon Jovi is now co-owner of the Philadelphia Soul, an Arena Football League expansion team. "I'm a football fanatic. I love football, always have," the New Jersey native said Monday. "It's the only sport I really live and breathe."

TODAY'S SAFETY TIP

WHEN MOUNTING/DISMOUNTING EQUIPMENT YOU MUST:

- ✓ Maintain Three-Point Contact When Mounting or Dismounting a Piece of Equipment (Two feet and one hand or two hands and one foot)
- ✓ Do Not Wear Jewelry When Riding or Working on Vehicles (Rings can get caught on equipment and pull off a finger)
- ✓ Ensure You Remove All Tools and Debris Before Dismounting/Mounting
- ✓ Ensure All Slippery Areas Are Cleaned

On This Day In History: August 24 1779

1779 John Paul Jones victorious

During the American Revolution, the U.S. ship Bonhomme Richard, commanded by John Paul Jones, wins a hard-fought engagement against the British ships of war Serapis and Countess of Scarborough off the east coast of England.

In August 1779, Jones took command of the Bonhomme Richard and sailed around the British Isles. On September 23, the Bonhomme Richard engaged the Serapis and the smaller Countess of Scarborough. After inflicting considerable damage to the Bonhomme Richard, Richard Pearson, the captain of the Serapis, asked Jones if he had struck his colors, the naval sign indicating surrender. From his disabled ship, Jones replied, "I have not yet begun to fight," and after three more hours of furious fighting the Serapis and Countess of Scarborough surrendered to him. After the victory, the Americans transferred to the Serapis from the Bonhomme Richard, which sunk the following day.

He continued to serve the United States until 1787 and then served briefly in the Russian navy before moving to France, where he died in 1792. He was buried in an unmarked grave. In 1905, his remains were located under the direction of the U.S. ambassador to France and then escorted back to America by U.S. warships. His body was later enshrined in a crypt at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

source: historychannel.com

